In June 2020, an operator, along with its drilling contractor, were conducting completion operations on a well in the Gulf of Mexico when the blind shear rams (BSRs) were damaged. As part of routine operations and regulatory compliance, a test of the BSRs was performed in which a blowout preventer (BOP) test tool was run. During this test, the drill pipe was inadvertently backed off at a connection above the test assembly as the drill pipe was rotated to release the test tool. When the BSRs were closed, the gallon count showed an abnormality, indicating an object was in its path. Upon recovery of the object, damage was found on the test tool as a result of an impact by the BSRs.

The incident should have been reported to BSEE’s district office immediately after the BSR test, as required by 30 CFR 250.738(i), but operations continued. Days later, the operator notified BSEE of the incident and said that the test was not reported earlier because the BSRs did not shear the pipe.
Therefore, BSEE recommends that Operators consider the following:

- Report all tests of BSRs to BSEE immediately when it impacts an object or fails to close completely on activation;

- In the event of a Blind Shear closure command that results in the Ram Block Blades contacting shearables and/or non-shearables, immediately plan to pull the stack in order to inspect the ram block and associated blades and fasteners;

- Review and confirm all conditions prior to testing any components of the BOP, and consider a checklist to organize the verification of parameters;

- Note an incident as a significant event in a Well Activity Report (WAR) submitted to BSEE if the BSR impacts an object at any time; and,

- Confirm all independent, third-party requirements under 30 CFR § 250.732 are met after the initial closing of a BSR, including, but not limited to, 250.732 (a)(1)(i).

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